

May 7, 2019

Oppose H.R. 312, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Reservation Reaffirmation Act

Dear Colleague:

We urge you to vote against H.R. 312, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Reservation Reaffirmation Act under suspension tomorrow. This bill would allow the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe to open a casino on the border of Rhode Island and Massachusetts. **H.R. 312 would violate the Indian Reorganization Act and reverse decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. District Court, and the U.S. Department of Interior.**

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe was federally recognized in 2007. Under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the U.S. Department of Interior is only allowed to take land in trust for tribes recognized before 1934. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Interior took land in trust for the Mashpee Tribe. In 2016, a Massachusetts District Court ruled that the U.S. Department of Interior did not have the right to take land into trust because the Mashpee Tribe was not recognized before 1934 in accordance with the Indian Reorganization Act and the 2009 U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the *Carcieri v. Salazar* decision.

While we are concerned about the economic impact this bill would have on Rhode Island, we are also concerned that H.R. 312 would set a dangerous precedent by undermining existing law and by creating an unfair process for tribes to receive land in trust. If Congress grants the Mashpee Tribe this exception, it would encourage other tribes to seek individual relief from Congress. Instead of Congress picking winners and losers, we believe that Congress should look at updating the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 to make the land to trust process more transparent and fairer.

Once again, we ask that you join with us in opposing H.R. 312 on Wednesday, May 8th.

Sincerely,

/s
James Langevin
Member of Congress

/s
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress